

What to WATCH

T SPORTS

Bangladesh vs Pakistan
1st Test, Day 4
Live from 10:00 am
Independence Cup

Swadhinata KS vs Abahani
Live from 05:45 pm
Abu Dhabi T10
Deccan Gladiators vs Team Abu Dhabi

Live from 08:00 pm
Northern Warriors vs The Chennai Braves
Live from 10:00 pm
La Liga
Osasuna vs Elche

Live from 02:00 am (Tuesday)
STAR SPORTS 1
India vs New Zealand
1st Test, Day 5
Live from 10:00 am



Lionel Messi, one of the frontrunners for tonight's Ballon d'Or award, skips past a host of Saint-Etienne players during PSG's Ligue A fixture at the Geoffroy-Guichard stadium on Sunday. The Argentine made three assists as PSG won the match 3-1. However, the victory was bittersweet one for the Parisian giants, who lost Neymar to a potentially serious injury.

PHOTO: AFP

Will Lewandowski deny Messi a seventh Ballon d'Or?

AFP, Paris

Robert Lewandowski threatens to deny Lionel Messi a record-extending seventh Ballon d'Or title as the prestigious awards ceremony returns Monday after it was cancelled last year because of the pandemic.

The Bayern Munich and Poland striker pilfered a Bundesliga record 41 goals in just 29 games last season to eclipse the long-standing mark set by the late Gerd Mueller.

Lewandowski, 33, scooped FIFA's prize for best male player of 2020 and has the backing of both coach Julian Nagelsmann and Bayern teammate Thomas Mueller after a prolific start to the new campaign. "Lewy" has to win the thing on Monday when you see the way he is playing at the

moment," Mueller said of a player who has already scored 25 times in 20 appearances this season.

"Robert deserves to win it, because in my view he has been more unbelievably consistent than any other player," Nagelsmann said last month in an interview with Munich newspaper Abendzeitung. While Messi has endured a stop-start beginning to life at Paris Saint-Germain, the Argentine bagged 30 league goals in his farewell season at Barcelona and also won the Copa del Rey. Further

strengthening his case was a first major international trophy in July, as Argentina beat rivals Brazil to win the Copa America at the Maracana -- ending the country's 28-year wait for the title.

"My biggest prize was what I was able to achieve with the national team," Messi told Catalan daily Sport recently.

"After having fought and fought so much for that achievement, it was the best given all that it cost. "If the Ballon d'Or were to arrive, it would be extraordinary for what it would mean to win one more. The seventh

would be crazy."

Ronaldo last took home the trophy in 2017. The Champions League's all-time top scorer has struck in all five games in Europe during his second spell at Manchester United but appears an outside contender for a sixth Ballon d'Or.

Karim Benzema received support from Thierry Henry, Zinedine Zidane and tennis star Rafael Nadal following a tremendous year with Real Madrid. However, the France star this week received a one-year suspended sentence for complicity in a bid to blackmail his former international team-mate Mathieu Valbuena with a sex tape. He was also given a 75,000-euro (\$84,000) fine.



Victories for Saif, Mohammedan

SPORTS REPORTER



Former champions Mohammedan began their Riviera Independence Cup campaign with a hard-fought 2-1 win over Muktiyoddha Sangsad at the Birshreshtha Shaheed Mostafa Kamal Stadium in Kamalapur yesterday.

Malian striker Souleymane Diabate and local player Shahed Mia scored one goal apiece for the Black and Whites while Japanese Tetsuaki Misawa reduced the margin for Muktiyoddha Sangsad on the astro-turf, which had uneven bounce leaving the footballers working hard to control the ball.

Mohammedan, playing with only one foreign recruit, Diabate, looked a bit uncomfortable initially as they played erroneous passes before settling down to penetrate the Muktiyoddha defence.

The Motijheel-based outfit came close to breaking the deadlock twice with Anik Hossain failing to beat goalkeeper Mamun Khan from a one-on-one situation in the 19th minute before Amir Hakim Bappi failing to connect to a low cross with the goalkeeper to beat six minutes later.

Diabate broke the deadlock with a placing shot from inside the box in the 36th minute, profiting from a fumble from Muktiyoddha defender Camara Younoussa before Tetsuaki was denied by

Mohammedan defender Rajib Hossain in the stoppage time of the first half.

Mohammedan looked more organised after the break and pressed hard to double their advantage but Shahed Mia squandered an excellent opportunity in the 48th minute. Shahed, though, made amends two minutes later with an angular shot availing a square-pass from captain Diabate.

Left-winger Jafar Iqbal then rattled the crossbar on the hour-mark before Muktiyoddha Sangsad pulled one goal back through a header from Tetsuaki after a rebound from compatriot Soma Otanj came in his way in the 80th minute.

Expatriate Abid Hossain, son of former national player and Mohammedan defender Abul Hossain, made his debut for the Black and Whites in the dying moments of the match.

Meanwhile, Saif Sporting Club came from a goal down to beat Bangladesh Army 2-1, thanks to a suicidal strike from Army's national defender Mehedi Hasan, in the second match of the day. The charges of Diego Cruciani could hardly impress in their opening match as they conceded the lead in the 43rd minute, with Mehedi converting from the spot for Army.

Nigerian striker Sunday Udoh levelled the margin from a spot-kick two minutes into the second half before Mehedi headed the ball into his own to hand Saif SC a winning start in the tournament.





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